

the colonies be declared independent. The debate on the motion continued far two days; it was then deemed wise to' postpone action for twenty days. The reason given by Jefferson for the delay was that "the colonies of New York, New Jersey, Maryland and South Carolina were not yet mature for falling from the parent stem, but that they were fast advancing to that state."* Delay, it was thought, would give public opinion in these lukewarm colonies time to' crystallize in favor of independence. The form of the declaration, was deemed highly important, and in order that there might be no haste, Congress at once (June 10th) appointed a committee consisting of Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston to draft the instrument. Upon Jefferson devolved the agreeable task of writing the declaration. He had three weeks to spend upon it, and it appears that he bestowed upon its composition the greatest pains. While he was thus engaged his name came up before the Virginia Convention for re-election, and he barely escaped defeat, being next to the lowest upon the list of successful delegates. On the 28th of June he brought the Declaration before Congress. He had previously submitted it to the committee, who adopted it after two or three slight alterations had been made by John Adams and one or two by Franklin. It was read and laid on the table. On the first of July the original motion of the Virginia delegation for independence was carried by the vote of nine colonies. New York and Pennsylvania were against independence on this vote; Delaware was divided, and South Carolina wanted time. Time was granted, and when the question was put to a vote on the next day, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Delaware threw their votes for independence. New York did not consent until July 9th. Having resolved upon independence Congress at once took up Jefferson's form of declaration.*

The document was roughly handled, the criticism sometimes being so acrimonious as to cause Jefferson to wince. During the overhauling some of Jefferson's fine phrases were expunged;

*See Independence, Declaration of, page 257.